

NEWARK
PUBLIC
INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT BY MAYOR SHARPE JAMES ON
SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM BETWEEN CITY, COUNTY AND ECIA

In early April, I stood with County Executive Jim Treffinger when we announced a partnership between the County and City to build a minor league stadium and professional soccer field in Newark. At the same time, we also revealed plans to build a new Essex County Jail in Newark, and to shut down this facility behind us, which I know is welcome news to the nearby residents of Society Hill, one of the City's loveliest townhouse complexes and the winner of the Harvard Divily Award for design. Our intent is to place the new jail in a site far removed from any residential area, and to close this overcrowded facility to allow for the continued growth of the Central Ward's University Heights neighborhood, which you see flourishing around you.

Nearly one month after our April announcement, I again joined Jim Treffinger at the new state-of-the-art Branch Brook Park Roller Skating Rink and tried to convince him to put on skates and join me on the floor as we opened this beautiful new facility.

Now, here we are today, just one month later, and in the true spirit of the continuing partnership between Essex County and Newark, we are about to sign a memorandum of understanding between our two governments and the Essex County Improvement Authority that will enable us to go fourth with the financing on the new Sportsplex and the siting of the jail.

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MAYOR'S STATEMENT AD 1

Both these facilities spell jobs and additional revenues for the City of Newark. Moreover, this memorandum provides assurance that the County and ECIA, which is putting together the financing on the Sportsplex, under Executive Director Tom Banker, will work to maximize the participation of small and minority Newark businesses and residents in the building and operation of the ball park. The agreement ensures that the County will do the same for the correctional facility.

The memorandum provides for Essex County to construct a correctional facility to accommodate between 2,400 and 2,800 inmates at one of two industrial sites, both of which are located in Newark's industrial meadowlands--far from any residential area. If all goes well, the County will assume responsibility for the central processing and detention of Newark arrestees by July 1. This marks a milestone for Newark as we have been trying to move this responsibility from municipal government to county government where it belongs and close our holding cells for years.

And finally, in the spirit of partnership and good faith, Jim Treffinger has assured us through this memorandum that Essex County will make in-lieu tax payments to Newark for a period of 25 years. This is something we have fought for from other governmental entities for years to help ease the tax burden on our residents.

I am excited about the prospects before us. And I am proud that the City of Newark--mayor and council working together--has joined in yet another successful partnership with County Executive Jim Treffinger, Freeholder President Joseph DiVincenzo and the other members of the Board of Chosen Freeholders in this venture. There are many more opportunities before us for the City of Newark and Essex County, and I hope we can continue to share in their fulfillment.